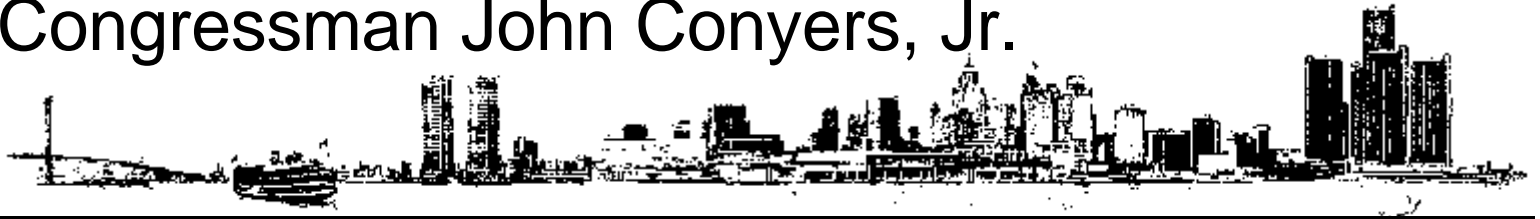


Congressman John Conyers, Jr.



Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee
July 10, 2001

Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus
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Conyers To Probe Alleged Secret Agreement between White House and the Salvation Army to Cut Back on Civil Rights; Calls on GOP to Delay Consideration of Charitable Choice Legislation

(Washington, DC) Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member on the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, issued the following statement in connection with the White House's reported agreement to help allow the Salvation Army discriminate against gays and lesbians in exchange for the Salvation Army's support of the White House's charitable choice legislation (H.R. 7):

"I am deeply concerned about today's press reports that the Bush White House is planning to issue an administrative legal action cutting back on the employment rights of minorities, including gays and lesbians, in exchange for obtaining the Salvation Army's political support for their legislative agenda. If this allegation is true, it is an inappropriate use of taxpayer funds at best, and an illegal bribe at worst.

"As a result, I am forwarding a request to the White House to immediately provide me with the following information:

- M** An itemization of all groups and persons that representatives of the Bush Administration have met with regarding charitable choice legislation, including representatives of the Salvation Army, along with the dates and a description of the substance and discussions of each meeting. The itemization is to include the names and titles of the Bush Administration representatives who participated in these meetings.
- M** A description of any actual or potential promises or commitments the Administration or any representative within the Administration may have made to any groups or person in exchange for their support of charitable choice legislation or provisions permitting discrimination in employment.
- M** A copy of any and all drafts of a reported administrative legal action or other regulation which would protect charities from state and local efforts to prevent discrimination against gays and lesbians in hiring and domestic-partner benefits, along with any legal memorandum or other material concerning such a possible action.
- M** A copy of any and all communications within the White House or Executive Office of the President concerning charitable choice legislation or in connection with the above-listed meetings, promises or commitments and administrative legal action, including notes, e-mails, documents, memoranda, phone records and any other types of written, audio or electronic communication.

"I am also working with the General Accounting Office to use their authority to conduct a comprehensive investigation into these matters should the White House fail to voluntarily cooperate. Finally, I am asking the White House and the Republican Leadership of the House to defer floor consideration of H.R. 7 until we are able to obtain a full accounting of the facts. The last thing we would want to do is hastily consider controversial legislation which may be severely tainted by a quid pro quo.

“As much as any Member of the Congress, I support religious organizations having a strong and active role in dealing with our nation’s social ills. However, I have long been concerned that proposals such as H.R. 7 are merely tools to permit increased discrimination and which would inappropriately entangle religion in our political affairs. Today’s press accounts revive these fears, and the public is entitled to a full and prompt accounting of these allegations.”

(107-55)